Subsidised travels in lower class and sub-urban sectors

2076. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Planning Commission has called for an explicit subsidy in the budget to subsidise travel in lower classes and sub-urban sector instead of the existing system of upper class fares cross subsidise the lower class fares;

(b) whether the Planning Commission has also called for setting up of an independent Rail Tariff Regulator to make pricing of railway services more professional and transparent; and

(c) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Planning Commission has suggested reduction of the extent of cross subsidization between classes among passenger fares and also between passenger fares and freight to enable compensation to the Railways for social service obligation in. a more transparent manner.

(b) and (c) Setting up of Rail Tariff Regulatory Authority was included in the Tenth Five Year Plan Mid-Term Appraisal Document. However, Ministry of Railways is of the view that there is no need for setting up of separate Authority as the proposals for adjustment in Railways fares and freight rates included in the Railway Budget are debated and approved by the Parliament.

Stoppage of Saraighat Express in Assam

2077. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is no stop of Saraighat Express in the major stations of Assam except Guwahati, whereas it has several stops in almost all the major stations of West Bengal;

(b) if so, whether Government have taken any measures to provide stoppage in major stations like New Bongaigaon in Assam; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.